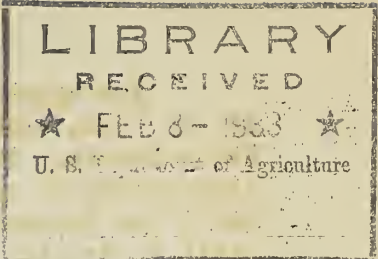


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HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR

Low-Cost meals

A radio talk by Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate stations; Tuesday, January 24, 1933.

I was talking the other day to the mother of three up-and-coming youngsters. It wasn't long before we got around to food, and she began asking me questions. She wanted to know what to serve the family when there's less rather than more money to spend. She is hard put to it these days, she said, to keep meals appetizing and interesting. She tries to pare her food budget right down to essentials, but, she said, "I'm bothered sometimes as to what are diet essentials. And I'm never sure about these foods you call protective."

Well, we soon got in so deep that I promised to send her our printed material on low-cost diets. The new folder called "Family food budgets" answers a lot of her questions. It gives adequate diets at minimum cost with an ample margin of safety in protective foods. It also gives restricted diets for emergency use, with what the nutritionists call "irreducible amounts" of protective and other foods. These food budgets are put in terms of weekly market orders for families all the way from 2 adults up to 2 parents and 5 children. The sample market order for each family states how many quarts of milk, how many pounds of different kinds of vegetables and fruits, bread, cereals, and all other kinds of foods to provide each week to safeguard nutrition. For, of course, as we all know, the less money we have to spend on food, the more careful we have to be to spend it for foods important to health.

I am also sending this homemaker another guide to low-cost meals. It tells just what foods the body needs to build it, keep it in running order, and supply it with energy. Also this guide shows how much to spend out of each food dollar on the five groups of food, in order to make sure that the diet is well-balanced. So with these plans to help her I believe my friend can soon check up and find whether she's spending her food money to get the greatest returns in food values.

Now I want to give you two or three suggestions from our experimental kitchen. Doctor King and Mrs. Yeatman are working out some very appetizing dishes for very low cost. Of course, all low-cost meals are bound to include a lot of bread or cereal in some form. For the cereals are one of the cheapest and best of all energy foods. But they are bland in flavor and very similar in texture. So these recipes for low-cost substantial dishes are a skillful combination of cereals or potatoes with foods and decided flavor.

For example, the food specialists made a delicious wholewheat chowder, enough of it to serve a family. And believe it or not, the total bill for the ingredients was under 15 cents. Into this chowder they put diced carrots, salt pork and onion for seasoning, milk and whole wheat cooked first in water to make it tender and bring out the good flavor of the grains.

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And speaking of whole wheat, have you ever tried scrapple made with it? As you know, scrapple is a good old-fashioned food, still very popular in Pennsylvania. To make it you start with some bony pieces of fresh pork and simmer them in water until the meat falls from the bones. Then strain off the broth and thicken it with cracker wheat or corn meal and let it cook slowly until it is like thick mush. Meanwhile, chop up the meat and add it toward the last, along with a little sage or thyme and salt and pepper to taste. Then pour the scrapple into a bread pan and let it stand overnight. Next day, turn out the mold, cut off slices, and fry them slowly until crisp and brown. Mighty good eating on a cold winter day.

Another good substantial low-cost combination, a kind of whole meal in one dish, is kidney bean stew. It has canned tomatoes and rice, and onions and salt pork, as well as the kidney beans.

And have you ever tried tomatoes with dumplings cooked right in them, or rather on top of them? Start simmering a quart or so of canned tomatoes in a good-sized kettle with a tight cover. Then mix up dough, about as you would for drop biscuit, and put by spoonfuls into the hot tomatoes. Cover the kettle tightly and let the dumplings steam and cook for about 20 minutes. The dumplings will be light and fluffy and are exceptionally good served with the tomatoes.

Then another flavorful, filling dish is onion soup with a generous piece of toast laid on top and sprinkled with grated cheese. Also, there are cakes made of canned salmon and mashed potatoes, fried until crisp and brown in a little fat. Salmon is one of the foods rich in vitamin D, which children need especially. And among the meats, don't overlook liver. Pork liver is very low in price now and has all the food values of the higher-priced calf liver. Liver and rice loaf, or liver scalloped with potatoes are good ways of extending the flavor. As spring approaches and eggs become more plentiful, cheese fondue, creamed eggs on toast, and omelet with tomato sauce and all the other variations, are good to serve often. And of course everybody remembers the good old reliables like beef or lamb stew with vegetables, corned beef hash, baked beans, and sausage and hominy.

The Bureau of Home Economics stands ready to give you all the information at its command, on this business of planning low-cost meals to safeguard health.

Now, week after next, Mr. Wells Sherman will be here and we'll take a look at the winter fruit and vegetable market.